

# California WIC Program

## Nutrition Education Minimum Standards

**Goal** from Federal Regulations for Nutrition Education (Code of Federal Regulations: Title 7, Chapter 2, Part 246, Subpart D, Sec.246.11)

Local agencies shall design nutrition education that:

1. Stresses the relationship between proper nutrition and good health with special emphasis on the nutritional needs of pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under 5 years of age, and raises awareness about the dangers of using drugs and other harmful substances during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.
2. Assists the individual who is at nutritional risk in achieving a positive change in food habits, resulting in improved nutritional status and in the prevention of nutrition-related problems through optimal use of the supplemental foods and other nutritious foods.

### **Overall Program**

Each local agency shall develop a nutrition education program for its participants and parents/caretakers of infant or child participants that:

- Is available at no cost to all WIC families
- Stresses the positive, long-term benefits of nutrition education
- Encourages them to attend nutrition education sessions, but does not deny food instruments (checks) if participants fail to attend or participate in nutrition education activities
- Is developed with goals, objectives, and action steps
- Is described in the local agency's annual Nutrition Services Plan (NSP) consistent with the State's nutrition education component of program operations
- Is evaluated periodically to ensure appropriateness and effectiveness
- Is integrated into program operations

### **Number of Contacts**

The local agency shall make available to all pregnant women, parents/caretakers of infant or child participants, and child participants, as appropriate, at least two nutrition education sessions in each six-month period.

For participants with a level 3 indicator of nutritional need, a registered dietitian (RD) or degreed nutritionist (DN) must provide two contacts, unless the RD or DN documents that a class or education provided by a WNA is appropriate. For participants with a level 4 indicator of nutritional need, an RD must provide two contacts, unless the RD documents that a class or individual education provided by a WNA is appropriate.

### **Delivery**

The local agency shall provide nutrition education that:

- Is provided by the local agency directly, or through arrangements made with other agencies
- Uses recognized effective methodologies and techniques for group and individual education
- Is delivered in a learner-centered interactive way which facilitates behavior change
- Engages the pregnant woman/parent/caretaker, and as appropriate, other family members
- Is in a language that the participant understands
- Considers the participant's nutritional needs and interests, food preferences, culture, religious beliefs, age, household situation, literacy, educational level, environmental limitations, and learning style

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### Content

The local agency shall provide learner-centered nutrition education that:

- Addresses: (a) the relationship between nutrition and health, (b) the benefits of eating a variety of foods, (c) the role of life-long dietary and health habits in a healthy birth outcome, optimal growth, child development, and disease prevention, (d) the benefits of regular physical activity, and (e) food purchasing and preparation
- Incorporates community and national nutrition messages
- Considers the participant's nutritional needs and interests, food preferences, culture, religious beliefs, age, household situation, literacy, environmental limitations, and educational level
- Is designed to be easily understood by participants and parents/caretakers
- Covers the appropriate topics for the participant's category as outlined in the WIC Program Manual
- Includes, at enrollment, the correct use of WIC food instruments (checks), and the selection of authorized foods
- Includes, at the first appointment after enrollment, an evaluation of the participant's understanding of WIC food instrument (check) use
- Encourages all pregnant participants to breastfeed their infants and encourages continuation of breastfeeding for breastfeeding participants unless contraindicated
- Includes drug and other substance abuse prevention information for all pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women and the parents/caretakers of infant and child participants

### Materials

All nutrition education materials used on an on going basis shall be distributed only after receiving written approval from the California WIC Program.

All materials developed by local agencies shall:

- Be accurate and relevant in content
- Be based on sound, established and current scientific evidence
- Considers the cultures of the participants receiving the material
- Be available in non-English languages where appropriate
- Be written at no higher than 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level
- Delivers consistent messages
- Have graphics that are appealing and reflect the cultural diversity of the target population

All materials shall be distributed at NO cost to participants.

### Documentation

The local agency shall:

- document the provision of or refusal of nutrition education in ISIS as described in the WIC Program Manual
- develop an individual education plan for all participants with a level 3 or 4 indicator of nutritional need

### Staffing

The local agency shall designate a *Nutrition Education Coordinator*.

### Evaluation

The local agency shall evaluate the effectiveness of nutrition education as described in the Nutrition Services Plan.